



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



STUDY OF INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS TO BACCALAUREATE DEGREE ATTAINMENT

MARCH 2006

The Advisory Committee is launching a three-year study to identify innovative programs and strategies that increase the likelihood that students from low- and moderate-income families attain a baccalaureate degree. Over the course of the study, we will produce a series of reports that highlight creative and promising approaches to ensure that students who aspire to such a degree move through the access and persistence pipeline in an efficient, effective, and timely manner. These reports will be designed to encourage federal, state, and institutional policymakers to embrace best practices that, over time, will narrow income-related gaps in degree completion.

In conducting the study, we will focus on ways to eliminate major structural barriers—academic, institutional, and financial—facing students and families from middle school through college. Our technical approach will include focus groups, regional hearings, site visits, interviews, literature reviews, and data analysis where possible.

Primary areas of focus will include, but are not be limited to:

Middle School and High School

- Academic Preparation: Access to a College-Prep Curriculum and Alignment of Standards
- Early Financial Aid Information

Transition from K-12 to Higher Education

- Credit-Based Transition Programs
- School Counseling and Mentoring
- Adequate Need-Based Aid

Higher Education

- Academic Preparation: Remediation
- The Role of Community Colleges (Articulation / Transfer / Awarding Four Year Degrees)
- Delivery Modes for Nontraditional Students
- Student Support Services
- Alternative Retention Strategies

The study's design, execution and reporting will include broad consultation with Congress, the Department of Education, the higher education community, state agencies, school districts, and early intervention organizations. Our first hearing will be held on April 4, 2006 in Washington, D.C.

**For more information about the upcoming April 4 hearing in
Washington, D.C, please visit our website: www.ed.gov/acsfa**